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SPECIMENS OF WOOD ENGRAVING

Modern Wood Engraving.

1839.

30 plates.

[From the Westminster Review.]

See last page for List of plates

NE1280
M6

NE,280
M.6
1839
MAIN

NE1280
M6

Sancho came back to Don Quixote's house, and resuming his former discourse, said, in answer to what the batchelor Sampson Carrasco desired to be informed of,—namely, by whom, when, and how the ass was stolen, "That very night, when flying from the holy hermandad, we entered the Sierra Morena, after the unlucky adventure of the galley-slaves, and of the dead body, that was being carried to Segovia, my master and I got into a thicket, where, he leaning upon his lance and I sitting upon my beast, being both of us mauled and fatigued by our late skirmishes, we fell asleep as soundly as if we had had four feather-beds under us. Especially I, for my part, slept so fast that the thief, whoever he was, had leisure enough to suspend me on four stakes, which he planted under the four corners of the pannel, and leaving me mounted thereon, in this manner got Dapple from under me without my feeling it."

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DEUXIEME PORTEUR. Je dis, Monsieur, que vous nous donniez de l'argent, s'il vous plait.

MASCARILLE *lui donnant un soufflet.* Comment, coquin ! demander de l'argent à une personne de ma qualité!

PREMIER PORTEUR *prenant un des batons de sa chaise.* Ca, payez nous viten ent.

MASCARILLE. Il est raisonnable.

Les Precieuses Ridicules.

CHARLOTTE. S'il vous a vue la première, il m'a vue la seconde et m'a promis de m'épouser.

DON JUAN *bas a Mathurine.* Eh bien ! que vous ai-je dit ?

MATHURINE à *Charlotte.* Je vous baise les mains ; c'est moi et non pas vous, qu'il à promis d'épouser.

Le Festin de Pierre.

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SNOWY OWL.

Surnia. *Generic Characters.*—Head not furnished with tufts of feathers. Beak curved from the base; nostrils large, oval; cere small. Facial disk incomplete. Auditory opening small. Wings of moderate size; the third quill-feather generally the longest. Tail rather long. Legs and toes thickly covered with feathers; claws long, curved, and sharp.—*Yarrell's British Birds.*

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XV.

Some village Hampden, that, with dauntless breast,
The little tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute, inglorious Milton,—here may rest;
Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood.—GRAY'S ELEGY.

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TARTUFFE. Couvrez ce sein que ne saurois voir,
Par de pareils objets les ames sont blessées,
Et cela fait venir de coupables pensées.
Le Tartuffe.

DON PEDRE. Il y a quelque temps que j'entends chanter à ma porte, et sans doute cela ne se fait pas pour rien. Il faut que, dans l'obscurité, je tâche à découvrir quelles gens ce peuvent être.—*Le Sicilien.*

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DON QUIXOTE AND THE MERCHANTS OF TOLEDO.

SANCHO PANZA.

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La Fille du Roi Edmund demandant l'aumône au Duc Robert.

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MEURTRE DE SHARP, PRIMAT D'ECOSSE.

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VIRGINIE CONSOLE PAUL.

PRINTED BY WHITTINGHAM AND CO.

LE JARDIN DU PARIA AU LEVER DE L'AURORE.

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PAUL ET VIRGINIE RETROUVES DANS LA FORET PAR FIDELE.

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Monsieur Jourdain.—Nicole !
Nicole.—Plaît-il ?
Monsieur Jourdain.—Ecoutez.
Nicole. (*riant*)—Hi, hi, hi, hi, hi.
Monsieur Jourdain.—Qu'as-tu à rire ?
Nicole.—Hi, hi, hi, hi, hi, hi.
Monsieur Jourdain.—Que veut dire cette coquine-là ?
Nicole.—Hi, hi, hi. Comme vous voilà bâti ! Hi, hi, hi !
Monsieur Jourdain.—Comment donc ?
Nicole.—Ah ! ah ! Mon Dieu ! Hi, hi, hi, hi, hi.
Monsieur Jourdain.—Quelle friponne est-ce là ? Te moques-tu de moi ?
Nicole.—Nenni, Monsieur, j'en serois bien fâchée. Hi, hi, hi, hi, hi.
Monsieur Jourdain.—Je te baillerai sur le nez, si tu ris davantage.
Nicole.—Monsieur, je ne puis pas m'en empêcher. Hi, hi, hi, hi, hi, hi.

Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme.

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And he that was of mildest mood did slaye the other there,
Within an unfrequented wood, while babes did quake for feare

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THE SECOND SHEYKH AND HIS BROTHER

ENCLOSING THE EFREET IN THE BOTTLE

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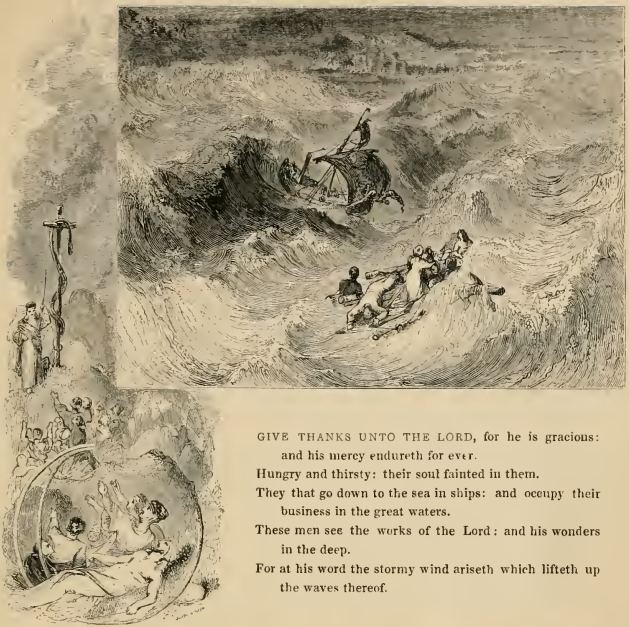
" Having eaten the date, he threw aside the stone and immediately there appeared before him an 'Efreet of enormous height, who, holding a drawn sword in his hand, approached him."—*Merchant and the Jinnee.*

PRINTED BY S. GENTRY



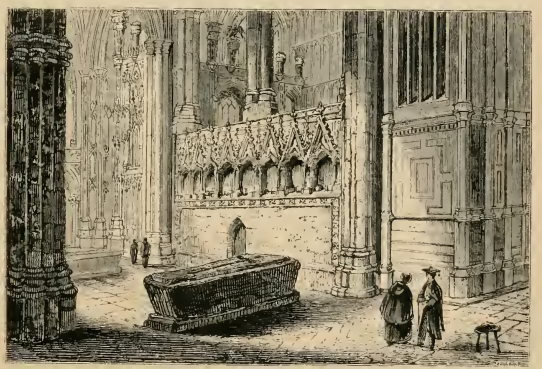
GIVE THANKS UNTO THE LORD, for he is gracious: and his mercy endureth for ever.

Hungry and thirsty: their soul fainted in them.

They that go down to the sea in ships: and occupy their business in the great waters.

These men see the works of the Lord: and his wonders in the deep.

For at his word the stormy wind ariseth which lifteth up the waves thereof.



INTERIOR OF WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL.

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Their uncle having dyed in gaol.
Where he for debt was layd——

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DANCE AL FRESCO.

THE BOUDOIR.

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CHARLES VI OF FRANCE, ATTENDED BY "LA PETITE REINE," PLAYING AT CARDS WITH HIS JESTER.

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BLACK BEAR.

TIGER.

DRAWN BY T. LANDSEER. ENGRAVED BY E. LANDELLS.

(SHOBERL'S NATURAL HISTORY OF QUADRUPEDS.)

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VILLAGE OF CASTRI ON THE SITE OF THE DELPHI.

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AQUEDUCT AT MYTELENE.

HOUSE OF CAPO D'ISTRIA.

DISTANT VIEW OF CORFU.

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LE LOUP PLAIDANT CONTRE LE RENARD, PAR-DEVANT LE SINGE.

Un loup disoit que l'on l'avait volé :
Un renard, son voisin, d'assez mauvaise vie,
Pour ce prétendu vol par lui fut appelé.
Devant le singe il fut plaidé,
Non point par avocats, mais par chaque partie.
Thémis n'avoit point travaillé,
De mémoire de singe, à fait plus embrouillé.
Le magistrat suoit en son lit de justice.
Après qu'on eut bien contesté,
Répliqué, crié, tempêté,
Le juge, instruit de leur malice,
Leur dit : Je vous connois de long-temps, mes amis ;
Et tous deux vous paierez l'amende :
Car toi, loup, tu te plains, quoiqu'on ne t'ait rien pris ;
Et toi, renard, as pris ce que l'on te demande.
Le juge prétendoit qu'à tort et à travers
On ne sauroit manquer, condamnant un pervers.

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(From a Cast.)

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AN IRISH ROW.

HABAKKUK BULLWRINKLE.

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THE BRAZEN LAVER.

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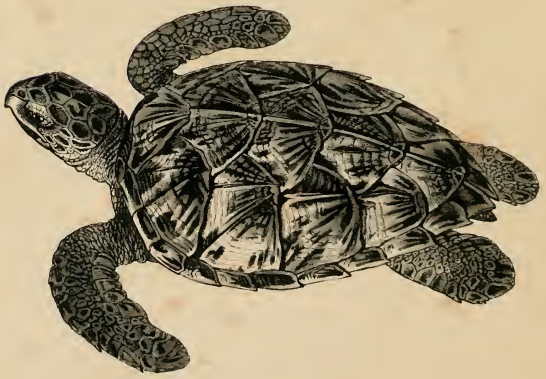
FIELD VOLE.



HAWK'S BILL TURTLE.

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ELBA.

ARCH OF TITUS.

NINEVEH.

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THE DINNER ROYAL AT VERSAILLES.

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E.LANDELLS Sc.

A FAMILY PICTURE.

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THE

LONDON AND WESTMINSTER REVIEW.

ART. I.—1. *A new Translation of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments.* By Edward William Lane. Illustrated with many hundred Wood-cuts. Parts I, II, and III. Royal 8vo. London, 1838.

2. *Paul et Virginie et La Chaumiere Indienne.* Par Bernardin de St Pierre. Ouvrage orné de magnifiques Vignettes. Royal 8vo. London and Paris, 1838.

3. *Greece; Pictorial, Descriptive, and Historical.* Royal 8vo. (unpublished.)

4. *Œuvres Completes de Molière,* avec 600 gravures sur bois par Tony Johannot. 2 vols. royal 8vo. Paris, 1838.

5. *Scripture Illustrations on Steel and Wood.* 4to. Parts I to VIII. London, 1838.

6. *Histoire de Gil Blas de Santillane.* Par Le Sage. Vignettes par Jean Gigoux. Royal 8vo. Paris, 1836.

7. *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard.* Illustrated with Wood-cuts. 8vo. London, 1836.

8. *Solace of Song.* 8vo. London, 1836.

9. *Pictorial Book of Common Prayer.* Illustrated with many hundred Wood-cuts. Royal 8vo. Parts I to X. London, 1838.

THOUGH the word 'engraving' is applied alike to impressions from plates of copper and blocks of wood, the means by which the impressions are obtained in the two arts of copper and wood engraving, are directly opposite to each other. The engraver on copper hollows out of the plate the lines of the impression he wishes to produce, while the engraver in wood leaves them standing on the block. The engraver in copper leaves the surface of the plate higher than the lines; the engraver on wood cuts it down below the lines. The black lines in a copper-plate engraving are produced by incisions or grooves; the black

lines in a wood-cut are produced by prominences. The wood engraver cuts away the part in the block which is to remain white or colourless; but the part in the copper-plate which is to be white in the engraving is left untouched by the engraver on copper. If an impression of a plain block of wood were taken as blocks are printed, it would present one uniform surface of black, but if an impression were taken from a plate of copper as copper-plates are printed, it would be colourless, or no impression at all. The wood engraver starts from black, the copper-plate engraver from white, the one toils to get white, the other to get black. If the reader refers to any of our illustrations in which black is conspicuous (the "Don Pedro" is a special instance of this) he will see effects of black or the deepest shadow produced by absolutely no labour whatever. The production of shadows exactly equal in colour, and similar in character, is impossible in copper, and when he sees anything approaching them in a copper-plate, they are the result, he may be assured, of great labour.

The manner of using the ink in the two arts is also opposite; it is put *into* the hollow lines of the copper-plate, but *on* the upstanding lines of the wooden block. The block is like the type which prints the words the reader is now reading, because it produces its black lines in the same way in which the forms of the letters are made, by ink put upon projecting lines. The copper or steel-plate is placed above a charcoal fire, and warmed before the ink is rubbed into the hollowed lines by a woollen ball. When enough of ink is thus put into the lines, the surface of the plate is wiped with a rag, and cleaned and polished with the palm of the hand lightly touched with whiting. The paper is then laid on the plate, and the engraving is obtained by pressing the paper into the inked lines. The wooden block is generally inked like type, by beating with a ball or a roller. Another difference between engraving on wood and on copper is that in the latter the lines are not merely cut, they are also corroded into the copper by aquafortis.*

* The Chinese, in the production of all their books, use wood engraving. The method they pursue, says Du Halde, is as follows:—The work intended to be printed is transcribed by a careful writer upon thin, transparent paper. The engraver glues each of the written sheets, with its face downwards, upon a smooth tablet of pear or apple-tree, or some other hard wood; and then, with gravers and other instruments, he cuts the wood away in all those parts upon which he finds nothing traced; thus leaving the transcribed characters ready for printing. In this manner he prepares as many blocks as there are written pages. He then prints the number of copies immediately wanted; for he can always print more, if they are required, without the labour of re-composition necessary in typography: nor is any time lost in correcting the proof sheets, for, as he is guided in his engraving by the strokes of the written copy, or perhaps the original of the author

The production of black is a great advantage which wood possesses over copper. Hence there are several effects in which the wood engraver excels. It is true, indeed, that as absolute black does not exist in shadow, it is not needed in the representations of it; but there is still a great advantage in having it ready for use or modification as wanted. However superior copper may be as to delicacy, and sharpness, and variety, and the touches by which flesh tints and aerial perspective are obtained, whereby even the "Nineveh" of Powis—so full of the spirit and the poetry of the prophecies, where the solitary stork, a thing of life, is the image of death, so deep and still is the desolation around it—is surpassed; there are powers in the shadows of the wood-cut which, when wielded by a master—a Thompson or a Williams—the capacities of copper are incapable of matching. The "Brazen Laver," by Samuel Williams, by its skilful contrast of extreme light and shadow, seems to realize the very sparkle of the metal and bubble of the water. It is to a perception and appreciation of this peculiar advantage, rather than to any surpassing excellence of the engravings themselves, that the great merits of the French illustrations of '*Paul et Virginie*' are owing;—the draughtsmen understood the blocks. The most skilful and elaborate workmanship, which neglects this advantage of wood, is eclipsed by even an inferior order of art, which makes a happy use of it. As an illustration of this we may mention in contrast with the "Brazen Laver," the "Merchant and the Jinnee," also engraved by Samuel Williams. The latter, though more imposing to the imagination, and more elaborate in treatment, yields in effect to the former, with its sparkles, its bubbles, and its blackness.

But the greatest advantage wood engraving has over copper is that there neither need be, nor is, any intermediate person or process between the designer and the engraver. In almost all cases of engraving on copper, the picture has first of all to be reduced from its original size to the intended size of the engraving; in all cases it has to be drawn reversed on the plate, and after being thus twice translated, usually by two different translators, the process of engraving not the picture itself but the second version of it begins, which in the case of copper is really a third translation, because the engraver has to make the lines, which in the other case are made by the draughtsman.

himself, it is impossible for him to make any mistakes, if the copy is written with exactness.

In the museum of the East India House there are to be seen several Chinese blocks, and engravings from them, and also the instruments they use for the purpose of cutting the engraving on the block.

The great end of the whole art of engraving is to render the spirit and genius of a great artist accessible to the thousands, or the millions, by embodying them in cheap and portable forms. Wood engraving, professedly the cheapest and most portable of all the representations of great pictures, excels equally in fulfilling the highest mission of its art, by the superior accuracy and fidelity with which it represents the spirit and genius of the picture. In wood engraving the draughtsman makes black lines with a pen or pencil, which the engraver leaves untouched; thus the black lines are the original designs themselves put into a shape for printing.

Cheapness is the advantage of engravings over paintings, and one of the advantages of wood-cuts over copper-plates. A plate of metal is useless after a few thousand impressions have been taken from it, while a wood-block will yield sometimes two or three hundred thousand impressions: and thus the expenses—and it costs much less to produce a first rate wood-cut than it does to produce a first rate copper-plate—are divided among nearly a hundred times as many purchasers.

This circumstance, by bringing copies of beautiful pictures to the cottages of poor men, will help to lessen the rudeness which is not necessarily, but is too usually associated with poverty. There is a deep morality in the love of the beautiful. The Spartan blessing, "the Beautiful to the Good," had its fulfilment in itself, for beauty is only one of the qualities of goodness. The character or action which is right, is of necessity also beautiful, or noble, and he must be prepared to overlook everything great in the civilization of the ancient Greeks who does not see that great things may come of creating a love of art among all ranks, since all the inner life of that wonderful people was derived from their reverence of beauty,—their religion was the religion of the beautiful. Serene and harmonious objects, by the very emotions which those words express, make the soul into which they sink, like themselves by doing so; the beauty which the eye drinks re-appears in the affection which the heart feels; the moral qualities which the beautiful has in itself are brought out variously and sweetly in the lives of the lovers of it: the white light falls on the flowers and re-appears in iris hues. The mind which has fresh upon it the disgust excited by the affectations of those whose talk is of tone, of chiar'oscuro, of Claudes and of Guidos, may be disposed to think any approach to such talk a degradation of a bold peasantry,—and we sympathise in the thought,—but a single conception of what our peasants really are, a reminiscence of red-faced, bare-necked men in smock frocks,

sitting at the ale-house door with their pipes and porter pots, will more than suffice to exhibit the improvement which would be evinced by them even in conceited criticisms on cross-hatchings and deep tones, stipplings and good taste. It ought, therefore, to be admitted that his fellow men owe no slight obligations to Mr Charles Knight for the great impulse he has given to wood engraving, for the adaptations he has made of it, and the moral good he has done by it to the poor of the whole civilized world;—thanks and praise be to the man who has multiplied and extended the pleasures of the beautiful where they were scarcely known before!*

There are two kinds of designs in wood engraving—the one in which the draughtsman dictates and lays down every line, the other in which he only traces outlines and paints tints, entrusting the completion of his purpose to the artistical feeling of the engraver. The order of our illustrations is determined in the list by this circumstance. The "Bourgeois Gentilhomme," &c., are fac-simile engravings, in which every line is drawn. The "Village Hampden," the "Family Picture," "La Fille du Roi Edmund," the "Storm," &c., are partly tinted and partly fac-simile; and in the concluding series the designer left the effect of the lines almost wholly to the genius of the engraver.

There is some difficulty and much labour, though of a merely mechanical sort, in cutting clearly and sharply lines on wood, which cross and intersect each other. Such work, which is called "cross-hatching," is easily done on copper with one sweep of the burin, but in wood it is the result of minute and tedious picking. This kind of work makes wood engraving costly; and where the engraver is limited to time and price, he substitutes an easy mode of getting a result almost as effective, by making his lines thick and close to each other. The reader may learn the difference between close-lining and cross-hatching by referring to the shadows and dark parts of our illustration of the "Tartuffe." The engraver here began his shadow with cross-hatching, and then betook himself to the less laborious and cheaper work of close-lining. In Orrin Smith's eminently effective cut

* So completely did the 'Penny Magazine' bring the art of engraving on wood into general notice, that a certain young lord is reported to have said, wood engraving was invented with the 'Penny Magazine.' The 'Pictorial Bible,' and the 'Pictorial History of England,' the Pictorial Prayer Book,' the new edition of the 'Arabian Nights,' with a close and excellent new translation, and illustrations so accurate, that the appropriate turbans for every hour of the day are given; and lastly, the new 'Pictorial Shakspeare,' just announced, continue the good work which the 'Penny Magazine' began, while casts of the engravings in the latter are now sent to every part of the civilized world.

of "Le Meurtre de Sharp," we see all the gradations of shadow which the picture requires produced by comparatively little labour, avoiding cross-hatchings, whilst, in several other of our best illustrations, the tints of colour are got by cross-hatchings, which involve a great amount of labour and skill.*

There is a consideration of a merely mechanical kind, without a regard to which it is impossible to judge rightly of the merits of a wood engraving—to assign to the designer and to the engraver their due share of merit—or to see all the causes which affect the production of the beauties or the defects of the work of art. The printer is a most important party in the process; not merely as the organ-blower contributed to playing the music of Handel;—he takes a part in a trio. A wood cut may be drawn by a first-rate draughtsman and engraved by a Thompson, yet if the pressman is not also an artist, the product will be far from beautiful. Hence there are scarcely more than half a dozen printers in London who can do full justice to a wood-cut. It is only a few years since the Chiswick press alone had any repute for printing from wood—but great improvements were introduced by the late Mr Vizetelly and his partner MrBranston,—and the printing of wood-cuts is now an object to some of the first firms. A few words will explain how it is that the taste of the pressman acts upon the engraving. In pressing the paper upon the block, the parts intended to be blackest must endure the heaviest, the whitest the lightest, pressure—and all the degrees and tints of shade must be regulated and graduated proportionally. The pressman is the master of the perspective—brilliancy and delicacy wait at his disposal, and all those numberless niceties of which the tasteful, as distinguished from the coarse, the glaring, and the vulgar, is made up, are dependant on his skill.

"When an engraving," says Mr Savage, in his *Practical Hints on Decorative Printing*, "is to be printed, neither the pressure nor the impression ought to be uniformly equal; if they be, the effect

* Most engravings are the product of several hands, and there are numerous engravers to whom the whole work of an engraving is never trusted. Figures are assigned to one, landscape to another, sky to a third, and the harmony of the whole is adjusted by the master. He portions out the work according to the aptness of his assistants for it, and he must possess all the talents of an artist to direct skilfully the mechanism of a manufacturer.—Almost all our illustrations are the works of the artists themselves whose names they bear. The "Storm" and "Prison Scene" by Jackson; the "Elba," by Orrin Smith; those by the Williamses, and by Landells, C. Thompson, Vasey, Gray, and Green; the "Snowy Owl," "Bourgeois Gentilhomme," "Village Hampden," "La Fille du Roi Edmund," and "Diner Royal at Versailles," by J. Thompson, are the actual performances of these artists.

that is intended to be produced by the artist will fail; and instead of light, middle tint, and shade, an impression will be produced that possesses none of them in perfection; some parts being too hard and black, and other parts neither pressure nor colour enough, with obscurity and roughness; and without any of the mildness of middle tint, which ought to pervade great part of an engraving, and on which the eye reposes after viewing the strong lights and the deep shades.

"To produce the desired effect with engravings great nicety and patience are necessary in the pressman; for a single thickness of thin India paper is frequently required over very small parts, and the edges of it even pared down, where the engraving is fine; and I would advise that the overlay should never be cut at the edges; but even where great delicacy of shape is not required, that it should be torn into the shape wanted, which reduces the edges, and makes the additional pressure blend with the surrounding parts.

"In particular parts the impression will sometimes come up too full; it will then be necessary to add an additional tympan sheet, and cut those parts away from it, scraping the edges which come too hard; and scraping away half the thickness of a tympan sheet, in small parts that require to be a little lightened, will improve the impression.

"Engravings that are in the vignette form require great care to keep the edges light and clear; and in general it is necessary to scrape away one or two thicknesses of paper, in order to lighten the impression and keep it clean; for the edges being irregular, and parts, such as small branches of trees, leaves, &c., straggling, for the purpose of giving freedom to the design, are subject to come too hard, and are liable to picks, which give great trouble to pressmen, and are difficult to be kept clear of, particularly with a wooden platen which from wear has become uneven. In these cases high bearers, placed round the block, will be found advantageous for the purpose of equalizing the pressure on the surface of the engraving; and they also protect the edges from the severity of the pull, which is always injurious to the delicacy of the external lines. When great nicety of impression is required in a vignette, it will be found beneficial, after the engraving is beat with ink, to take a small ball without ink, and beat the extremities lightly: this will not only take away any superfluity of ink, but will be the means of preventing picks, and give to the edges lightness and delicacy, particularly where distances are represented.

"The pressman will find it an advantage, if it be necessary to do full justice to an engraving, to have a good impression from the engraver, and place it before him as a pattern; and then arrange the overlays and tympan sheets, till he produces a fac-simile in effect. But, as I observed before, his best lesson will be when he can obtain the assistance of the artist at the press side, as by that means

he will obtain more instruction of what is required than by any other method. The light parts of a fine engraving require little pressure; but the depths should be overlaid, so as to produce a full and firm impression."

The older masters of wood engraving, Albert Durer among the rest, as well as Bewick at a later time, used opposite means for the same purpose in printing. Instead of an *unequal* pressure on an *even* surface, they used an *equal* pressure on an *uneven* surface, by lowering the surface of the block according to the sorts of tint required. The *overlaid* block can only be printed with the hand press, at a very slow rate—not above 50 impressions in an hour; but a *lowered* block makes the work of the pressman merely mechanical, and enables the block to be printed by the machine at a speed of 800 copies an hour.

This mode of lowering blocks has been applied to the steam press, and with what success every one may judge from Rubens' "Descent from the Cross," the "Blind Boy" of Murillo, and the "Knife Grinder" of Teniers, in the 'Penny Magazine.' Such progress has been made in printing in this way, that though steam has never yet worked blocks of delicacy equal to the illustrations of the 'Arabian Nights,' there need be no doubt of attaining at last all but an equality to the hand press. By getting rid of the dearness and delay of overlaying and the hand press, the cost will be incalculably diminished.

We must say a few words respecting the materials used in wood engraving. The ink must be impalpably smooth and equally mixed, in order to cover completely the surface of the block, and come easily from the block to the paper. The paper is still more important. India paper from China, which until lately was supplied from the lining of tea-chests and wrappers of silk, is decidedly the best, and takes off the finest impressions. A hard stiff paper defies the skill of the best pressman, and a gritty or knotty paper riddles the block, making the impression look as if covered with white dots—doing more harm in taking off a few hundred prints, than with a soft paper would be done by as many thousands. The paper ought to be carefully damped, the moisture equally distributed by turning for some days before use; if too wet, the ink is not taken in equally; if too dry, the impression will be rough and uneven.

The woods most in use in engraving are the box and pear-tree.* The best box wood is imported from the Levant: the tree of our own country does not grow large enough. The

* Papillon treats fully of the woods best adapted to the graver, in his 'Traité Historique et Pratique de la Gravure en Bois.'

wood is cut into slices *across* the grain: formerly, when used by Albert Durer and his successors, it was cut into planks lengthwise or at the *side* of the grain; and, until very recently, the French used it in this way. Fine lines are unattainable by the old method, and knives instead of gravers were then used to cut the wood.

Casts of wood-blocks may be taken in metal and multiplied without end. When the matrix or mould is made of plaster, the cast is called a Stereotype; when of metal, a Polytype, or *Cliché*.* A print taken from a Polytype is almost equal in the sharpness of its lines to one taken from the original wood-block, though it has not the mellowness of the impression from the block itself. A very keen and experienced eye alone could discover that our illustration of "Le Loup plaidant contre le Renard," is an impression from metal, and not from wood. In stereotyping, the humidity of the plaster is apt to swell the wood-block, and the delicate parts become rough and coarse in the stereotype; and, besides, the plaster does not penetrate the fine lines of the wood so subtilly as the metal.

The origin and early history of wood engraving are obscure, and entangled in dry and thorny controversies. The antiquarian will be in a condition, perhaps, to dogmatise about whether the origin of it belongs to the Italians or the Germans, the Chinese or the Dutch, or will at least have made an approach to the discovery, when he has found out the immortal inventor of that primeval wood block, the butter-print, and added it to his store of antediluvian antiquities, in which already, as Burns says—

> "Of Eve's first fire he has a cinder;
> Auld Tubal-Cain's fire shool and fender;—
> A broomstick o' the Witch of Endor,
> Weel shod wi' brass."

In all the accounts we have seen of the origin and progress of engraving, there has been a sad lack of every kind of insight into the social agencies which preside over the fine arts. The origin and development of an art, instead of suggesting inquiries why the lovers of beauty have sought one form of it in one age and a different in another, is merely an opportunity

* The celebrated assignats of the French Revolution were printed from "*Clichés*," the originals having been cut in metal, in relief, in the manner of wood. The "*mouton*," or machine with which the *Clichés* were struck, is now in the possession of Mr Charles Thompson, of Paris, who uses the very machine in the production of his Polytypes or Polytypages.

seized by every succeeding writer for complimenting his predecessors on the badness of their logic, the sweetness of their tempers, and the size of their mistakes.

The beautiful assumes new shapes and comes up in new places in consequence of changes in the institutions and manners of society:—

> "As from its fathomless abode, a spring
> Breaks on the bosom of a sullen lake."*

The ancients were not destitute of engraving because they could not have found it out, and used it had they chosen, but because they were not book-men, and therefore did not give themselves to the decoration of books. Engraving is an offshoot of Christianity. It comes from that great change in the manners of men by which, for the first time in the history of the world, and for nearly a thousand years together, all the thoughtful men in Europe were made solitary students instead of social inquirers, readers in silent cells instead of debaters in groves and gardens. The poet and philosopher of old, in Greece and Rome, addressed popular audiences, and not as now, readers in privacy:—

> "Athens the eye of Greece, mother of arts,
> And eloquence, native to famous wits,
> Or hospitable; in her sweet recess,
> City or suburban, studious walks and shades:
> See there the olive grove of Academe,
> Plato's retirement, where the attic bird
> Trills her thick-warbl'd notes the summer long;
> There flowr'y hill Hymettus, with the sound
> Of bees, industrious murmur, oft invites
> To studious musing; the Ilissus rolls
> His whispering stream."

The picture in almost every mind, of a student in the middle ages, is that of an ecclesiastic in a cell—the rich light of the stained glass from his gothic window falling on his large oak-bound volume, and the spread pages of bright black letters embellished all round with radiantly-coloured figures. The progress of books is also the progress of engraving which embellishes them. To the monastic institutions, and the way of life and the manner of study they have directly and indirectly transmitted to us—afterwards modified by the fact that the merchant and soldier have become studious like the priest, and by the yet more recent irruption of the poor into the still and retired

* From the 'Athenian Captive.

chambers of study—we owe the genius and skill, the progressive beauty and the widening extension, of the art of engraving.

A few words on the principal engravers on wood, and designers for it, of the present day, will appropriately conclude our remarks.

Though great merits belong to others, there are two families who may be said to be at this moment at the head of this art—the Williamses and the Thompsons—families which contain members allowed by all to stand highest, and to whom the art is almost a family pursuit. We have already alluded to the skill of Samuel Williams, who is self-taught, in light and shade, and his versatility of talent and great variety of touch may be seen by a comparison of his "Arch of Titus" and his "Irish Row." His younger brother, Thomas Williams, who likewise is partial to highly-coloured designs, is only second to Thompson in engraving the human face and figure, and is almost equally successful in landscape. Both brothers possess much talent as draughtsmen and painters. Their sister, Mary Ann Williams, has executed some fac-simile engravings of exquisite delicacy, from the designs of Français, in the 'Paul et Virginie,' and there are few tinted landscapes more brilliant than her "Jardin du Paria." Of the Thompsons, without mentioning those who have their laurels yet to win, there are two brothers who are highly distinguished — John, a native of Manchester, and Charles, both pupils of the elder Branston, and sons of a respectable London merchant. Charles Thompson, the younger brother, went to Paris in 1816, partly for pleasure, and partly to establish himself as a wood engraver if he saw an opening. He found but two or three engravers on wood in all Paris, and they were inferior to the English engravers both in talent and in their mode of engraving. They still cut, like the old masters of wood engraving, on the *side* of the grain of the block, with instruments like knives, gouges, and chisels; whereas the English used tools of the same form as the steel and copper-plate engravers, and cut on the *end* of the grain. Charles Thompson was immediately induced to settle in Paris; he was employed by the *Imprimerie Royale* and the publishers, and received two silver medals from the hands of Louis the Eighteenth himself; and when Charles the Tenth presented medals to persons eminent in science and art, he received a very handsome gold medal, and was a guest at the splendid entertainment given by the Minister of the Interior on the occasion. The English Government has not yet concerned itself about art in this form, else we should have had to mention similar honours conferred on John Thompson,

confessedly the first in his profession in Europe. When but fourteen years of age, the great interest he took in drawings and prints induced his father to make him a pupil of the elder Branston, who was then what is called an engraver in general. The latter half of his term of tuition was given solely to wood engraving; and soon after its expiration he abandoned the manner of his teacher, and formed a style of his own. He was supported by the advice of Thurston, then the principal draughtsman for wood, and who, being himself a pupil of James Heath, had a general and profound knowledge of engraving. Being the engraver selected to execute the embellishments of the publications for which the Chiswick press became celebrated, his reputation was established, and the position then awarded him in his profession he has ever since maintained. The distinguishing traits of this artist are the exquisite clearness and delicacy of his lines, and the felicity and fidelity of his delineations of the human figure. Before commencing an engraving, he makes the character of his subject an especial and earnest study, and spares no pains to mark the history of every detail. "The Village Hampden" exhibits his skill, in the sturdy and intrepid face of the boy who is demanding a justice he is prepared to enforce,—in the sympathy of the little girls who are looking on,—and, above all, in the expression of malice which appears through the cowardice and fear of the convicted aggressor himself. If anything could atone for the original fault of the designer, who has illustrated heroism of historic dignity, by a school-boy incident, the skill displayed by Thompson would do it. "The Boudoir" and the "Dance al Fresco" are exquisite in their gracefulness. In the latter the male and female forms, so full of life and elegance, beauty and spirit, with the group of dancers seen in the distance, make up a work of art, in which, though doubtless the merits of the designer are great, he owes much to the talent of his engraver. The figures of the "Supplicants to Duke Robert" are equally remarkable for true and beautiful expression; but the gem of our collection is the "Diner Royal at Versailles," by this artist. At first sight it is hardly possible to detect whether this is an engraving on copper or wood—of such minute delicacy are the touches, and so skilfully graduated are the tints. Almost all our wood engravers generously declare this to be the best engraving ever executed on wood. The mere amount of toil crowded into such small space is wonderful, but the variety of the costumes, and the ease and grace and character of the personages, the complete mastery of perspective, and the reality imparted to the decorations of the apartment, form together a work not likely to be soon surpassed even in this rapidly advancing art.

The name of Orrin Smith occurs often on both French and English engravings. He is an able and intelligent cultivator of his art, and has introduced improvements and attempted effects, especially in landscape, which have advanced it. He learned the use of the graver from Samuel Williams. Some of his landscapes are exquisite—how beautiful is his "Elba," waves, skies, mountains, and vessels, with still shadows on the sea!—and there is much merit of a different kind in his "Murder of Sharp."

The pupils of Bewick now alive are, we believe, Harvey, Clennell, Nesbit, Jackson, and E. Landells. The last, is one of the best engravers of animals on wood. The spirit and truth of his "Black Bear" and "Tiger" are admirable, and in the latter the difference between the woolly hair of the cub and the long hair of the mother, a delicate distinction, is made manifest. "A Family Picture,"—an odd name for an English terrier, an Irish lady-hound, and a Scotch terrier, is full of spirit and character—the dogs typify the nationality of the three kingdoms. John Jackson has engraved a large part of the 'Penny Magazine' and of the first series of Northcote's 'Fables,' all the 'Pictorial Prayer Book,' and the Cattle and Sheep in the "Farmer's Series;" both he and Bewick are natives of Ovingham in Northumberland. The delicacy of the "Prison Scene," and the "Sea Piece" prove him a worthy pupil of his old master. It is only necessary to repeat the names of Harvey, Clennell, and Nesbit, to recal to every one acquainted with the best embellished works of the last quarter of a century, the qualities by which they have made themselves distinguished. The merits of the first of these artists as a designer belong less to this subject than to that of Art in general.

Whatever superiority our wood engravers may have over the French, they as yet beat us in design, because few of our best draughtsmen have yet condescended to design for wood. The principal exceptions since the time of Bewick have been Thurston, Stothard, and Harvey, to whom we hope may now be added Edwin Landseer, Wilkie, Callcott, and Mulready.* The advantage to an eminent artist, of a mode of engraving which furnishes him with a perfect fac-simile of his own design instead

* The following list comprises most of the French artists of eminence, who have made designs on wood; and it is a list of which France has reason to be proud:—P. De la Roche, Eugene Lami, A. Deveria, A. Scheffer, Robert Fleury, Tony Johannot, Jules David, Tellier, De la Croix, Victor Adam, Foussereau, J. Grandville, J. Lecurieux, J. Gigoux, Levasseur, Marville, Pernot, Francais, Paul Huet, Meissonier, Isabey, Jacques.

of a copy of a copy, was experienced by Stothard in the superiority of his beautiful illustrations of Rogers's 'Italy,' as designed on wood by himself, to the same subjects as afterwards executed on steel.

Many reasons have urged us to undertake the toil and cost of this article and its illustrations: on some of them we have already dwelt sufficiently; there is yet another on which we would insist.

To that large portion of educated gentlewomen of the middle classes, who now earn a subsistence chiefly as governesses, we wished to point out this art as an honourable, elegant, and lucrative employment, easily acquired, and every way becoming their sex and habits. We have already done honour to the exquisite delicacy and elegance of the engravings of Mary Ann Williams; we venture to say that few women of taste, whatever their rank in life, can look on "Le Jardin du Paria au lever de l'Aurore" without envying the artist her power of producing a scene so beautiful, and of exciting in thousands the pleasing emotions inseparable from it. Apart from all pecuniary considerations, to be able to do it is an elegant accomplishment, and the study of the principles and details of taste which it implies, is a cultivating and refining process to every mind. All that can be taught of the art may be learnt in a few lessons, and thus an acquirement made, which will afford no slight protection against misfortunes to which, in this commercial country, even the richest are exposed—and a means of livelihood obtained, which, without severing from home, without breaking up family assemblies, is at once more happy, healthy, tasteful, and profitable than almost any other of the pursuits at present practised by women. The lady we have named is not alone in the practice of this art: we might name also Eliza Thompson, and Mary and Elizabeth Clint, who have furnished excellent engravings for the 'Paul et Virginie;' and we have heard of several daughters of professional and mercantile men, not likely to be dependant on their own exertions for support, who have wisely, by learning this art, acquired both an accomplishment and a profession. The occupations, we may also add, are few indeed to which gentlewomen of this class can more worthily devote themselves, than to an art which peculiarly aims and is peculiarly fitted to enhance the enjoyments and refinements of the people, by scattering through all the homes of the land the most beautiful delineations of scenery, of historic incidents, and of distinguished persons. X.

LIST OF THE ILLUSTRATIONS.

SUBJECT.	DESIGNER.	ENGRAVER.	WORK.	PROPRIETOR.
Mascarille et les Porteurs	Tony Johannot	Porret et Lalou	Molière	Dubochet.
Don Juan, Charlotte et Mathurine		—— ——		
Don Quixote and Sancho Panza		Breviere		
Don Quixote and the Merchants of Toledo		Andrew Best Leloir	Don Quixote	
Sancho Panza		Sears		
Le Tartuffe		J. Albert Thompson	Molière	
Don Pedre (Le Sicilien)		Beneworth		
Field Vole—Hawk's Bill Turtle	Dickes	Vasey	Bell's British Quadrupeds and British Reptiles	Van Voorst.
Le Loup plaidant contre le Renard	J. J. Grandville	Chauchefoin	La Fontaine	Fournier.
Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme	J. J. Grandville	John Thompson	(Unpublished)	Dubochet.
An Irish Row	G. Cruikshank	S. Williams	Three Courses and a Dessert	Whitehead.
Habakkuk Bullwrinkle		T. Williams		
The Village Hampden	Sir A. W. Callcott	John Thompson	Gray's Elegy	Van Voorst.
Church Yard	J. Constable	W. H. Powis		
Black Bear,—Tiger	T. Landseer	E. Landells	Shoberl's History of Quadrupeds	Harris.
Snowy Owl	A. Fussell	John Thompson	Yarrell's British Birds	Van Voorst.
The Second Shevk and his Brother	W. Harvey	C. Gray	Lane's Arabian Nights	Knight.
Enclosing the Effect in the Bottle		W. T. Green		
Aqueduct at Mytelene	C. F. Sargent	Orrin Smith	Greece, Pictorial, Descriptive, and Historical	Orr.
House of Capo d'Istria			(Unpublished)	
Distant View of Corfu				
The Brazen Laver	S. Williams	S. Williams	Scripture Illustrations	Seeley.
A Family Picture	T. Landseer	E. Landells	(Unpublished)	E. Landells.
La Fille du Roi Edmund demandant l'aumône de Duc Robert	J. Lecurieux	John Thompson	Conquête d'Angleterre, par Thierry	Tessier.
Storm	H. Harvey	John Jackson	Pictorial Edition of Common Prayer	Knight.
Interior of Winchester Cathedral	J. Jackson			
Walter	W. Harvey	C. Nesbit	Children in the Wood	Thomas.
Prison Scene		John Jackson		
Dance al Fresco,—The Boudoir		John Thompson	Young Ladies' Book	Whitehead.
Arch of Titus	W. Harvey	S. Williams	Solace of Song	Seeley.
Elba		Orrin Smith		
Village of Castri on the Site of the Delphi	C. F. Sargent	Orrin Smith	Greece, Pictorial, Descriptive, and Historical	Orr.
Merchant and the Jinnee	W. Harvey	S. Williams	Lane's Arabian Nights	Knight.
Nineveh		W. H. Powis	Scripture Illustrations	Seeley.
Le Jardin du Paria	Paul Huet	Mary Ann Williams	La Chaumiere Indienne	Curmer.
Paul et Virginie retrouvés dans la Forêt par Fidele	Tony Johannot	Orrin Smith	Paul et Virginie	
Virginie console Paul		Thomas Williams		
Meurtre de Sharp, Primat d'Ecosse		Orrin Smith	Conquête d'Angleterre, par Thierry	Tessier.
Charles VI of France, attended by 'La Petite Reine,' playing at Cards with his Jester	Tony Johannot	Charles Thompson	Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne, par Barante	Dufey.
The Diner Royal at Versailles	Jules David	John Thompson	(Unpublished)	Le Comte Laborde.

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